



Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program



Policy Advisory FY21-003: National Outreach and Communications Program under SFR and Award Authority

Policy Contact: Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov, WSFR Policy Team Lead

To: Service staff associated with the National Outreach and Communication Grant Program

Date: February 1, 2021

Summary: The Sport Fish Restoration Act, as amended by Public Law 105-178 (Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998, June 9, 1998) authorizes a National Outreach and Communications (NOC) Grant Program. The law dictates that the Service will cooperate and consult with the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council) to develop a national plan to support increased participation in boating and angling activities in the U.S. Currently, the NOC Grant Program receives 2 percent of the funds available through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. In 1998, the Council developed a framework for a national program and established the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) as a non-profit organization with the mission to assist in implementing the national plan.

Under the current administrative process, the Service issues a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the NOC Grant Program every 5 years. It is accomplished, under law, through a competitive process. It is within the authority of the Service to administer the competitive program as it deems appropriate within the standards of the Secretary of the Interior, and under the law the Service has discretion to make awards to multiple applicants in support of the national plan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The competitive grant program is managed under the USFWS, Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) program and grants are administered by the USFWS, Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR).

WSFR Contact: Lori_Bennett@fws.gov

Definition:

16 U.S.C. 777a(2) the term "outreach and communications program" means a program to improve communications with anglers, boaters, and the general public regarding angling and boating opportunities, to reduce barriers to participation in these activities, to advance adoption of sound fishing and boating practices, to promote conservation and the responsible use of the Nation's aquatic resources, and to further safety in fishing and boating.

Funding:

16 U.S.C. 777c Division of Annual Appropriations

(4) National Outreach and Communications

An amount equal to 2.0 percent to the Secretary of the Interior for the National Outreach and Communications Program under section 777g(d) of this title. Such amounts shall remain available for 3 fiscal years, after which any portion thereof that is unobligated by the Secretary for that program may be expended by the Secretary under subsection (c) of this section.

Authority:

16 U.S.C. 777g

(d) National Outreach and Communications Program

(1) Implementation

Within 1 year after June 9, 1998, the Secretary of the Interior shall develop and implement, in cooperation and consultation with the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, a national plan for outreach and communications.

(2) Content

The plan shall provide—

(A) guidance, including guidance on the development of an administrative process and funding priorities, for outreach and communications programs; and

(B) for the establishment of a national program.

(3) Secretary may match or fund programs

Under the plan, the Secretary may obligate amounts available under subsection (a)(5) or subsection (b) of section 777c of this title—

(A) to make grants to any State or private entity to pay all or any portion of the cost of carrying out any outreach and communications program under the plan; or

(B) to fund contracts with States or private entities to carry out such a program.

(4) Review

The plan shall be reviewed periodically, but not less frequently than once every 3 years.

Associated links:

[Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, program evaluations](#)
[CFDA 15.653](#)